

New. *Voices*

volume two, spring 2004 issue

a collection of student writings



A Community College
of Indiana partner

Copyright 2004, *New Voices*. All Rights Reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part of any article, etc., without permission is prohibited. Until further notice, *New Voices* is published in the fall or spring of each year. The publication and Ivy Tech State College, A Community College of Indiana Partner, are not responsible for the accuracy and philosophy of materials submitted. All copyrights belong to the writers and artists individually.

New Voices

a collection of student writings

Congratulations to the writing students at the Community College of Indiana who are published in this second issue of *New Voices*.

This collection is a representative sample from the English classes on the Indianapolis campus. The English Department regrets it is unable to include all submissions.

The English Faculty whose students contributed manuscripts and material are commended for their support and assistance.

Special thanks to the Student Editorial Advisory Board

Chantel Bunnell

Michael R. Luna

Amy Lynn Scott

New Voices is a publication of the General Education Division,

Ivy Tech State College

Mark Magnuson, Division Chair

Carol Schuck, English Chair

Chris Wood, Academic Skills Assessment Chair

Design/Layout

Visual Communications Department, Rebecca Ray

Editor

Kathleen Rice

Managing Editor

Judith LaFourest

Intern

Jama Hufford



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
Lyrasis Members and Sloan Foundation



Table of Contents

Special Deputy 3336	
<i>By Don Rogers</i>	5
ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis)	
<i>By Dion Lohman</i>	8
When Life Was Simple	
<i>By James Edwards</i>	9
I Should Not Be Trusted With Laundry	
<i>By Jim Nierste</i>	15
July 4, 2002	
<i>By Dion Lohman</i>	18
How I Got Hooked	
<i>By Beverly Bennett</i>	19
House Robbery	
<i>By Omolere Oyeboode</i>	23
Growing Up in the Country	
<i>By Rita Henry</i>	25
Strange	
<i>By Thomas J. Andrews</i>	30
At The Hospital: Elton John's Assistance	
<i>By Lydia Wood</i>	31
In a Field	
<i>By Thomas J. Andrews</i>	34
A Lesson Learned	
<i>By Scott Isenberg</i>	35
The Stranger	
<i>By Thomas J. Andrews</i>	38
Honor Killings Must Stop	
<i>By Abigail Clark</i>	39



Going Home	
<i>By Regina Hasz</i>	43
Friend or Foe	
<i>By Thomas J. Andrews</i>	49
“Plan Colombia”	
<i>By Jason Bosh</i>	49
A Second Chance	
<i>By Samantha Jarrell</i>	55
Sylvia’s Song	
<i>By Helena Osak</i>	58
Saving the Rainforests	
<i>By Shannon Faris</i>	59
Source of Unity	
<i>By Heather Baughman</i>	64
A Disposable Child	
<i>By Marshia Mingee</i>	65
Every Time...Every Ride	
<i>By Donna J. Wolfe</i>	69
Love Yourself and Be Free	
<i>By Samantha Laskowski</i>	73
A Student’s Dream	
<i>By Helena Osak</i>	77
How to Submit Your Manuscripts/Art Work to	
<i>New Voices</i>	78

Special Deputy 3336

By Don Rogers

When police cars would go by with their sirens and lights on, I would try to imagine the scene to which they were going. My curiosity got the best of me and I soon found myself in Special Deputy School.

A special deputy has the same arrest powers, and goes to self-defense class just like police officers. My training took weeks to complete. My special training taught me about stun guns, pepper gas, and how to use a pair of 24 inch night sticks. I especially enjoyed learning how to take guns away from criminals and use arm holds to put them in handcuffs or use pressure points to control them.

When I graduated, my first duty was to guard and patrol a government building downtown, which was built for manufacturing specialized electronics. First, I had to familiarize myself with the emergency procedures. As I would patrol, I started to make friends with the employees. Most of them were engineers who would design missiles and bombs that were used in places like Desert Storm.

Even when I did not patrol, I was watching the building inside and out with cameras. I dressed in a suit and tie and carried a 357 Magnum pistol in a shoulder holster under my jacket, so I would blend in with the rest of the employees. I would also escort guests and employees to and from their cars.

There were a few times I had to evoke my powers, but nothing I considered serious until one day I was watching the parking lot



with the cameras. I saw two guys going through the parking lot, smashing windows out of cars and stealing items from them. I grabbed a radio and ran out there. Reaching them at a safe distance I yelled "Stop, you're under arrest." They started to walk towards me. I started to get very nervous. I shouted again, "Stop." But they still kept coming. I reached inside my jacket and released my gun from my holster.

One of them put his hands in his pockets. I ordered him to take his hands out of his pockets. Out of the corner of my eye, I could see some people watching this unfold. The paces picked up; they were soon too close for me to say anything else. I quickly drew my weapon with my right hand and cocked the trigger.

The thoughts that were going through my brain were fast as I started to play out different scenarios of what was going to happen. The situation had escalated to where I needed backup. I told the dispatch, "Officer 3336 has code 99," which means "suspects armed and dangerous."

I stood my ground. I had my pistol out and pointed at their heads. Now I was ordering them to stop or I would shoot. In the distance, I could hear sirens, but I did not know if they were coming to help me or not. My dispatcher was on the radio asking me to "signal 37." If the situation was under control, I should respond "signal 38." I gave no response. The two men finally stopped within five feet of me. I could see their eyes, and I knew they were on drugs.

Now I was scared. I thought these guys had no idea what they were doing, but I stayed focused. By now I could not see anything around me. My vision became tunneled. I started thinking it was



going to be them or me. My hand was getting tighter around my gun. All of sudden, it seemed like out of nowhere, there were five squad cars from the Indianapolis Police Department and probably six deputies on foot surrounding us.

After we had them in custody, I searched them and found a large knife on the guy who had his hands in his pockets. I had the privilege of arresting them and prosecuting them. I am no longer a special deputy, but at least now I know what goes on at the scene when I hear the sirens go rushing by.





ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis)

By Dion Lohman

Being paralyzed with fear
is not the same as being paralyzed; it should not be an adjective
for people who can choose their own situations.

Lying here in bed,
flaccid as a seaweed
that drifts in on the power of oceans,
to dry and die
With the stench of washed up things. My
Swollen belly's taut, black hemisphere,
Rises like an Octopus whose tentacles
are used to bind him.

I cannot swallow my own spit. A sip of water
Seems like a crashing wave
to the break wall of my throat. Dying's
Sticky tide is high...

When Life Was Simple

By James Edwards

Growing up during the late 50s and 60s on a small farm in Louisiana, near the Texas border, where the nearest paved road was three miles away, and it was twenty miles to town, life moved at a slower pace. Surrounded by pine forests that stretched for miles in every direction, far from the noise and confusion of the cities, the world I lived in was peaceful and quiet. My dad used to say, “We live so far back in the woods they have to pipe sunlight in.”

I loved country life, but as the years went by, I became restless. Things were a little too slow and quiet for a young boy with dreams of faraway places. I was eager to grow up so I could see what the rest of the world was like. Eventually I grew up, and I did see the world. I went places and saw things most people only read about. Now that I’m older—and hopefully wiser—I find my thoughts drift back to those happy days I spent as a young boy on the farm.

I remember one cold December when I was five-years-old, my grandparents came to stay with us for a while. Mom was going to have a baby in a few weeks, so grandma and grandpa decided to come help out around the farm. Dad worked on the railroad, which meant he was gone most of the time, and my brother and I were too small to do the chores unassisted. Mom couldn’t get around very well in her condition, so she welcomed my grandparents being there to take care of us.

In 1938, grandpa had built the house we lived in. It was a simple, two-bedroom frame house, as most people in that part of the country built in the years just after the Great Depression. There was



no indoor bathroom—we had an out-house in the back—and when the electric pump on the well would break down, we had to draw water by hand. The rooms were small, except for the large back bedroom where my parents slept. There was a small, wood-burning heater in my parents' bedroom. In winter, all the beds were moved into their room where it was warm. An extra bed was set up when grandma and grandpa came to visit, and with all of us sleeping in the same room, it became quite cozy. I remember mom tucking me in at night and covering me with three or four big quilts. They were so heavy it felt as though I was pinned to the bed. I could barely move, but I was warm.

Grandpa always got up early. It must have been 4:30 in the morning, when I heard him rustling around getting firewood for the heater. I struggled out from under the quilts, and got out of bed. I loved being around grandpa. Whenever he was there, I followed him like a puppy, not wanting to miss anything he might do or say. I shuffled across the cold wood floor to the heater where he was stirring the coals and putting in fresh firewood. As I got near, without even looking, he reached out, wrapped his arm around my shoulder, and pulled me close to his side. In my mind I can still see his face and hear him say with a soft southern drawl, "Baby, what you doin' up so early? The chickens ain't evun up yet. You git on back ta bed now. We gotta big day ahead." I hugged him and scurried back to bed.

One early spring morning when I was ten, I awoke before dawn to the smell of coffee brewing and bacon frying. The aroma filled the house. As I slowly wiped the sleep from my eyes, I could hear mom calling, "Come on boys, it's time to get up." I hurriedly put on

my clothes and stumbled into the kitchen where mom was putting homemade biscuits in the oven. She turned and gave me a hug as she whispered, “Hurry on out to the hen house and get me some eggs, then get your chores done. Breakfast is gonna be ready soon, and you got school today.” It was still dark outside, so I grabbed a flashlight and ran down to the hen house. As I gathered the eggs, I could see the first rays of sunlight breaking over the pine trees. Although it was early April, there was still a chill in the air. I hurried back to the house, put the eggs on the kitchen counter, got my jacket, and went out to do my chores.

Little brother and I were in charge of feeding all the animals every morning. Since I was the oldest, I took care of the cows and the one old horse we had. My brother fed the two dogs, and the chickens. I didn’t mind doing chores as much as my brother did. I liked being around the animals and even named all the cows and calves. They always seemed to know when it was feeding time. In the half-light of dawn, I could see them leisurely walking from the back of the hay meadow toward the barn where our old horse was already waiting at his feed trough. Walking along, I could see a dense layer of fog about two feet thick hanging like a cloud near the ground in the meadow. It looked so dreamlike in the early morning light; I couldn’t help stopping for a moment to admire its beauty before continuing with my chores.

I finally got to the barn, fed the horse, and was taking a bucket of corn to feed the cows milling around the trough, when several of them began nuzzling me in the back as if to say hurry up we’re hungry and you’re not moving fast enough. With my work done, I went back up to the house for breakfast.



Mom always made sure we ate a good breakfast every morning, and she was a wonderful cook. On the table were plates piled high with bacon, eggs, and hot biscuits so good they made our mouths water. We had homemade jam, fresh butter, and glasses of cold milk, or fresh squeezed orange juice. Breakfast at our house was always a feast. After my brother and I had eaten everything but the table itself, we went to finish getting ready for school. Mom gave us a kiss as we walked out the door. By the time we got to the end of the driveway, I could hear the school bus coming. Mom always watched us from the kitchen window, so I turned around and waved to her. I thought to myself, “Don’t worry mom, we’ll be home soon.”

Summer in the country was a time of fishing poles, swimming holes, and cold watermelon on a hot day. A time of cut-off jeans, bare feet, and homemade ice cream. The weather was hot and humid, but growing up in the South we didn’t think about it, because that’s just the way it was and we had to deal with it. We learned to find ways of cooling off on those hot summer days; fishing or swimming down at the creek, where the cool water and gentle breezes through the oak trees were better than any modern air conditioner, (although we didn’t know what that was at the time), was a popular way to escape the heat.

Winston and Dwayne Bridges were my cousins who lived three miles down the road from me. Winston and I were only a year younger than Dwayne. We spent a great deal of time together in our youth and traveled back and forth between our houses along an old wagon road through the woods, which shortened the trip to one mile. We walked or rode horses to get around most of the time. It

gave us a sense of independence not having to rely on anyone for transportation. As long as our chores were done, we were free to come and go as we pleased. Summer was a carefree time of hunting, fishing, camping, or just roaming through the woods on horseback.

As teenagers, we baled hay on the local farms to earn extra money. We would start at sun-up and work until one or two in the afternoon. Soaked with sweat and covered with hay, we'd get on our horses and race to our favorite swimming hole to cool off. It sure felt good diving into that clear, cold water on a hot day. Sometimes we'd take a watermelon with us and throw it in the creek. After an hour or so, the melon would be ice cold, and we would sit under the trees for hours eating watermelon and talk about what we wanted to do after high school. Getting away from country life and seeing the world seemed to be the main topic of discussion. We were restless and bored, not realizing that these would be some of the best days of our lives. We just knew there had to be more to life than this.

The years passed slowly, and we had many more good times together. We finished high school and went our separate ways, seeking our destinies in the world outside the one we had known as children. Occasionally, we get together at our old home where we spent those carefree times. We sit around talking about the good old days, have a laugh or two, and eat some homemade ice cream. All too soon, we have to go back to the real world, the one we thought was so grand and exciting when we were growing up.

When we're young, we can't wait to see what's on the other side of the hill. When we get there, we're caught up in the constant turmoil of living. When we get older, we want to go back to the way things were in our youth, but nothing stays the same. So when the



world starts to close in around me, and I need to get away, if only for a few moments, I close my eyes, and let my mind wander back to the days of dirt roads and swimming holes—the happy times of my youth, when life was simple.



I Should Not Be Trusted With Laundry

By Jim Nierste

As a 13-year-old, I believed my seventh grade classes were mostly inconsequential when compared to being popular amongst my classmates. My drive for popularity started with the clothes that I wore. One popular fad at the time of my junior high education was soft and faded blue jeans. New, dark blue jeans fresh off the rack had to be modified by bleaching and softening them until they were the color of a sunny sky and as soft as a lamb's ear. The lightest blue color attainable was determined to be the best. Anything done to excess was considered commendable and I wanted to be the best.

My friends told me how to make soft and faded jeans. I needed to wash them in bleach and soak them in fabric softener. I was in a hurry so I decided to combine the two steps. I poured one gallon of bleach and one half-gallon of fabric softener into the bathtub. I swirled my jeans around and watched the dark blue color fade away. After soaking them for several hours, I rinsed them out and put them into the dryer before I went to sleep that night so they would be ready for the next school day.

Upon waking, I hurried to the dryer to retrieve my creation. I slipped my foot into the leg of my pants. My big toe caught a seam and tore right through the fabric. My pants were tearing as if they were made out of paper. Carefully I slid them on the rest of the way. I tried to button them and the button came off. Something had gone terribly wrong! My stature at school would be compromised if I did not have my trendy pants.



I pinned the pants together and went to school. By the third hour of classes, my knees were totally exposed and my skin was irritated from the remnants of the bleach. Later, my Industrial Arts teacher, Mr. Vohris, berated me for wearing pants with holes in them to school.

Although I learned a valuable lesson about the corrosive properties of bleach, I discovered that I still did not do laundry well. When I was 18-years-old, I moved from my mother's home and took an apartment with some friends. A few days later, I paid a visit to the apartment's coin-activated laundry facility. My clothes were grubby from working eight hours in construction and then half of the night laboring at a warehouse. I wanted my clothes to be clean so I used four cups of laundry soap and started the machine.

While my clothes were washing, I walked outside to the nearby pay phone to talk to my girlfriend and pass the time. When I returned to the laundromat, the maintenance man greeted me at the door. I detected a hint of sarcasm in his deep voice when he said, "You just had to use the whole box didn't you."

When I looked at the machine I was using, I was astonished to see the one-foot high accumulation of suds on top of the machine. Soapsuds also cascaded off the washer and enveloped the floor for several feet in all directions. Panicked, I ran to the machine, opened the lid and put my hands in the bubbles as if I could stop the overflow. A short time later I was provided a mop and a bucket for the mess and some good ribbing for my blunder.

I have learned about the mechanics of doing laundry through my own slip-ups, but I still make mistakes. Just recently, I washed a load of clothes without checking the pockets of the pants. After



running the dryer for about 40 minutes, I opened the door to fold my clothes. I was horrified to see black dots and streaks all over every garment. A black crayon had been left in my pocket. As it tumbled repeatedly in the hot dryer, it melted.

Not only did it appear to have ruined my clothes, but inside of the dryer beads of black wax stuck to the cylinder like leeches on a swimmer's leg. After allowing the dryer to cool, I managed to pop the beads of crayon from the dryer. Several washings in hot water were necessary to clean the marks from my clothes.

I am careful when I do the laundry now. I know from my experiences that one little lapse can have ramifications, causing property damage, personal injury or just damaging my pride. Whether it is bad luck or bad judgment, I know that I should not be trusted to do the laundry.





July 4, 2002

By Dion Lobman

My nerves
A frozen spider
Of white fireworks,
In the dark closet
Of a country's soul.

How I Got Hooked

By Beverly Bennett

I don't really remember how or where I first heard of or even became aware of what crochet was. I just knew I wanted to be able to do it. I had tried knitting, but couldn't catch on to it. I think I'm too uncoordinated to use the two needles. Anyway, I decided to teach myself how to crochet. In crochet, instead of using two needles, only one hook is used, and the stitches are much different from knitting, and more varied.

I bought an instruction book, some yarn, and a hook. I tried for a while, but it seemed like I couldn't catch on to crochet. So, I left it alone for about a year. Then, while cleaning out a closet, I ran across my uncompleted project, and thought; "Okay, let's try this again!" After a lot of tangled yarn (and wasted money), a couple of lopsided granny squares, several other crooked swatches, and many, many frustrated hours, I had it. Then I learned the different basic stitches – chain, single, and double, and how to put them together (reading patterns).

I had it, but I wasn't perfect. I thought I could make anything I saw, but I was wrong. At that time, my daughter, Jennifer, was six-years-old, and I decided I would make her a sweater. That was the strangest looking thing to ever pass for a sweater with short sleeves and a scalloped, square neckline. It looked like a big square with two small squares attached to each side, and I was actually proud of this. My daughter, poor thing, was proud of it too, and she wore it for about two years.

My mother, seeing me do a lot of practicing and not making



anything, took it upon herself to tell me that I never would get anything made. That only made me dig my heels in deeper with an “I’ll-show-her” attitude. I kept on practicing, really trying to perfect this craft. I needed to keep my stitches uniform in size and keep the same number of stitches row after row. Before I could get all this down, my niece became pregnant.

I made her a pink and white baby blanket, and had the nerve to try getting fancy with my stitches, throwing in some v-stitches and shells just to make it different. It looked pretty good, that is, if no one looked at the edges. I’d lost some stitches along the way and then picked them up again. I didn’t realize this until it was finished, and I had given it to my niece. My niece was pleased with it. That baby is now thirteen-years-old and she still has her blanket.

Undaunted by this mini-failure, I kept working at my new craft. I learned more stitches and a new technique called “filet crochet,” which is like cross-stitching, but with yarn and a hook. I also made two other baby blankets, and they came out with straight edges. I bought pattern magazines everywhere I could find them. Soon, I was making all kinds of things: bookmarks, afghans, potholders, etc.

I also learned about the different types of yarns and how choosing the wrong kind will affect how each project will turn out. Not all yarn weights can be used for all crocheted projects. For example, worsted weight is quite heavy, and not always suitable for making a baby’s sweater or blanket, and cotton works better for potholders and trivets. I learned that hook size is also important in determining the size and shape of an item. The smaller the hook, the smaller the stitches will be.



About eight years ago, I made my sister, Sandy, a sweater-coat. It was a variegated, knee-length sweater, and very heavy. At one point, I practically had to start over from the beginning because I had lost one or two stitches and it was starting to slant. I had learned too much, and had come too far for this to happen, so I ripped out all my stitches down to where it was once again straight, and started from there. Since then, I refuse to make anything less than perfect; everything has to be exactly as the pattern is written. My sister loved the sweater.

Since I've finally mastered this craft, my sister and I have started a craft class at church for the children. On one Saturday, they may learn to make a granny square, cross-stitch letters, or cut material from a pattern. I teach them to crochet.

It's been about sixteen years since those frustrated days of tangled and knotted yarn, lost and uneven stitches, lopsided blankets, and blocky sweaters. Now things come off my hooks pattern perfect and with lots of love. And I have approximately 5,000 patterns. They're all in books and fill almost two large Rubbermaid storage containers, and I'm still adding more. I also have every size hook made, and four three-foot long, two-foot deep plastic storage boxes filled with surplus yarn. My sister crochets occasionally and "shops" for yarn at my house.

Now I really think I'm a pro, and have decided to try to design my own pattern. It's going to be a purple and gold afghan with the Lakers' team logo in the middle. At least that's how I plan for it to turn out. It's still in the drawing stage; so I still have to do a count to know how many stitches I'll need to get the foundation the right size to not only get the lettering correct, but for it to be the right

size to qualify as an afghan.

Crochet started out as a challenge I was determined to meet, became an interesting and relaxing hobby, and now (somehow) has become a full-blown obsession. I can hardly sit without having a hook and yarn in my hands. One of the magazines I buy for patterns is titled: *Hooked on Crochet*, and that says it all!





House Robbery

By Omolere Oyebode

Our family will not forget the day our house was robbed. This was a day in the life of the people who lived in the area when everything turned into chaos. The robbery went from one house to another, and this was because there was no effective security provided for the people living in this area.

Back in Nigeria, my home country, armed robbers at times have the upper hand over the police because of the highly sophisticated weapons they use. Some of these weapons were smuggled into the country by the armed robbers. About one o'clock AM, everybody in this area had gone to sleep and suddenly people started hearing a huge noise and sporadic shooting. People in each house started to wake up and wait for the time the robbers would get to their house. In the individual houses, there was nobody with a gun who could fire back at the robbers.

When they got to our house, the main gate was forced open before they could get entrance into the building. They asked us to open the door or else it would be terrible for us if they should force the door open.

When they entered into the house, they woke everybody and ordered us to come to the living room. One of them stood there with a gun and the rest went inside the room to search for money and valuables, like clothes and cosmetics. Every valuable item in the house, including the electronics, was taken. God saved one of my brothers who wanted to argue with them and the one with a gun warned him, "I will shoot you dead, if you are not ready to



cooperate like the others in the house,” he said.

On the following morning, people started counting their losses and they called for a landlords’ meeting to decide what had to be done in order to provide security for the people. At the meeting, they decided to ask each landlord in the area to contribute some amount of money every month for them to employ a security guard to watch over the area at nighttime. The valuables that they made away with took us more than ten years to replace.

On that day I knew that no matter how powerful you are, when you meet somebody with a gun or dangerous weapon, there is nothing you can do. I pray that God will not let me witness again what I saw the day our house was robbed.



Growing Up in the Country

By Rita Henry

The summer before I turned eight, my family, consisting of my parents, three brothers, and three sisters, moved to a small farm three miles north of Lebanon, Indiana. The farm had thirteen acres, six acres that were cultivated and planted by the farmer next door, and the other seven had a pond, some hills, and a small wooded area. My father wanted to raise a few cows, pigs, and chickens, and my mother wanted to plant a garden. Between the two of them, our family could be mostly self-sufficient for food.

My first experience with living in the country was a shock. The house my parents purchased was old; the back part looked as if two shacks had been moved up close to the house and then nailed on to it. My father and his brothers decided to rip this part off and start fresh. This half of the house contained the kitchen and the bathroom.

Since the remodeling was not completed when we moved in, I had the experience of using an outhouse on a regular basis. If I had to go to the bathroom in the middle of the night, I would desperately try to wait until morning, but most of the time I could not wait that long. When I was too uncomfortable I would get up and grab the flashlight. Terrified, I would go out the door, looking everywhere to make sure no one or any night creature was around.

Walking in the dark with just the small pool of light from the flashlight, I would get to the outhouse. Trembling, I would reach out to open the door. Mice and spiders and bugs love outhouses and I was definitely not fond of any of the three. Eventually, I



would work up the courage to open the door and go inside, checking all the corners to make sure they were clear. I would hurry and go to the bathroom, then run back to the house and get safely back into my bed after my terrifying adventure.

One of my favorite things about living in the country was the freedom and space to go off by myself, to escape from everyone in the household. My favorite escapes were reading and climbing trees. While reading my favorite book, *The Secret Garden*, I could escape from my life and disappear into the story. Climbing a tree was a good escape in the summer since the branches of the trees were filled out with leaves and if I climbed high enough no one could find me, unless I answered when someone called me. I especially enjoyed it when I could use both of my escapes at once. I would grab a book and go climb a tree, disappearing amongst the leaves and branches, climbing up until I was invisible from the ground. I would find a secure, comfortable spot to relax, not only to get lost in the tree but also in the lives and adventures of the characters in my book.

Another favorite place to escape was the back field. It had once been a gravel pit, which had created small hills, cliffs, and a pond. When the pond would freeze over, I would put on my ice skates that I had received the first Christmas we lived there, and I would glide across the ice. When it would snow, which it did quite a bit during our first few years living there, the snow would drift over the hills and cliffs and my brothers, sisters, and I would get out the shovels and sleds. We would dig tunnels through the snowdrifts on the hills and cliffs. After the tunnels were dug, we would sled right through them flying over the hills, hoping that we would not end up in the

pond, which was at the bottom of the last hill. We would spend hours upon hours out in the cold, not realizing we were cold until it was time to go in the house.

Life in the country was not only about climbing trees and playing in the snow; we also had daily chores that had to be done. Caring for the animals and the garden were part of the daily chores. The main job in the summer was planting, weeding, cultivating, and harvesting the garden. The garden soil was prepared by our next door neighbor, Mr. Limp. He would bring his tractor and plow and disc the soil until it was smooth enough to plant.

After the soil was prepared then the fun part began. My mother would dig shallow furrows in perfectly straight even rows so that I could plant the seeds. She would hand me a stick the proper length to keep the seeds from being over crowded or too far apart. She would carefully instruct me to put the stick at the beginning of the row and then my first seed went at that spot with the next seed being placed at the end of the stick. Seed after seed, row after row, I would place the seeds in the ground. After the seeds were placed, my mother would cover the seeds with soil. Then the daily gardening began, pulling weeds and hoeing between the rows. I had to hoe and weed one row a day or I would not be allowed to spend the afternoon at the swimming pool in town.

Finally, the garden would be ready for harvesting. The peas, leaf lettuce, and radishes would be the first produce of the season. My mother made wilted lettuce salad from the leaf lettuce. We would pick the lettuce just before dinner; while we were picking and washing it, my mother would fry bacon until it was crisp and then add vinegar to the bacon and bacon grease. After the vinegar and



bacon mixture was heated thoroughly, she would pour this over the fresh leaf lettuce.

We would eat the radishes raw; just cut off the tops and the lower root, wash them and they were ready to be eaten. Peas grow in pods with only six or seven peas per pod. A large bushel basket would yield only about a gallon of peas, but the flavor was worth it.

The green beans, tomatoes, and corn became ripe about the same time, which was during the hottest part of the summer. Since it was usually 90 to 95 degrees in the scorching afternoon sun, the best time to pick these items was early in the morning; usually we would be in the garden by 7 AM. By the end of summer, the cellar and the freezer were full of home-canned and fresh-frozen vegetables ready for fall and winter consumption.

Some produce grew wild around the farm and did not require planting and cultivating; the only thing we had to do was harvest the fruits of nature. One of these gifts of nature was an abundance of black raspberry canes along the fence rows. The raspberries would ripen around the Fourth of July, which meant we could have homemade raspberry ice cream for part of our celebration.

Picking raspberries is a painful experience. The canes are covered in stickers that are much smaller and closer together than the thorns on roses. I had to very carefully reach in and gently remove each berry from the cane, being cautious not to crush the berry or get my clothing or myself stuck in the thorns. In spite of the thorns, I loved picking the raspberries since I usually ate every other one that I was picking. Besides raspberry ice cream, my mother also made raspberry jam and my mouth still waters thinking of the joy of a breakfast of toast and raspberry jam. Simple foods



are simple pleasures that remind me of the joys of growing up in the country.

As an adult, I miss the simplicity, the fun, and the adventures of being a child in the country. I would love to go out and build snow tunnels and sled all day long and not feel the cold. When things get stressful, I still yearn to escape up a tree and read a book without interruption. Growing up in the country, I learned that if I carried out my responsibilities, I would get rewards such as going to the swimming pool or something as simple as homemade raspberry jam on my toast in the morning. Despite the responsibilities and work involved in country living, I find myself yearning for the simple pleasures of life in the country.





Strange

By Thomas J. Andrews

Strange people, strange language, strange land:
A strange place, hard to understand.

Strange weather, strange nights, strange days:
Strange customs, people of strange ways.

In a strange land of strange clime:
A war without reason or rhyme.

In a strange country, off afar:
In a strange and uncalled for war.

Strange people with strange sounding names:
Still their laughter and crying is the same.

Strange land of buildings and towers:
laughter sorrows the same as ours.



At The Hospital: Elton John's Assistance

By Lydia Wood

In 1995, my son Phillip was hospitalized at Riley Hospital. He was five-years-old, and he was having trouble with his kidney again. One of his problems is hydronephrosis of his left kidney, which means he has one kidney smaller than the other. This problem causes him to have Urinary Tract Infections (UTI). I did not have my son circumcised at birth. Without him being circumcised, Phillip was collecting a great deal of bacteria under the extra skin, also causing UTI's. His Urology doctors decided surgery was needed for his kidney.

After his surgery, he needed about five days to recover in Riley Hospital because the doctors had to circumcise him. He spent about four days there, and then the subject was brought up about the hospital bills. Phillip's insurance was Medicaid and this insurance only paid for a two-day stay, and his hospital bill was \$8000. I had a visit from the social worker and she gave me the telephone numbers and addresses of Elton John and Michael Jackson. I was very surprised. The social worker told me that Elton John and Michael Jackson have a funded program that takes care of families in a time of need.

I contacted Elton John's agent and revealed our story to him. We also contacted Michael Jackson's agent and the same story was told. We waited for four weeks for a response, but we did not hear anything. And the waiting was making us restless and nervous. I went to the Riley Hospital social worker and pleaded to have



Phillip's bills put on hold for another month until I could come up with a plan. She agreed.

After another two weeks, Phillip, my husband, and I finally met Elton John in person at Riley Hospital. We were in shock. It was the greatest feeling that I ever had. I met a real live entertainer, a famous singer. We stood with our mouths wide open, and Elton John kept saying, "Hello guys, I am not going to bite." We were speechless at first, and then we finally came to reality and shook Elton John's hand.

Elton John wore a bright red glitter jacket with red glittered glasses to match. He wore black pants with black velvet stripes down the sides. His face is aged a little; his hair has grayed some. His hat was black with different colors on it, which looked like diamonds. On his left hand, there were large, beautiful diamond rings on two of his fingers.

After shaking hands, Elton John said, "I will be glad to pay off all of Phillip's medical bills here at Riley Hospital."

One week later, we heard from Michael Jackson's agent. We could not meet Michael Jackson because he was on tour. We were disappointed. Michael Jackson sent Phillip two music videos, and aired all his music videos for Phillip on VH1, the music video station on Comcast Cable TV for a whole weekend. It was exciting to watch all of Michael's videos; the whole family loves Michael Jackson videos. This was a special, memorable event for Phillip, his dad, and for me.

We will never forget what Elton John did for our son, Phillip; this will be remembered for the rest of our lives. This was special to me because Elton John came to our rescue.



We learned from this experience that there are people who are willing to share their wealth with others who are in need. I will never forget what Elton John did for my son, Phillip, and my family. Today, Phillip is 13-years-old and in good health. Phillip still remembers Elton John's visit to Riley Hospital and the weekend that Michael Jackson's videos were aired just for him. He loves Elton John and Michael Jackson still today.



In a Field

By Thomas J. Andrews

As I lay in a field one night,
I watched with awesome fear as each star shell burst bright.

I could hear the whine of each exploding shell,
As all about became a raging hell.

I shook with fear all during the fight,
As wounded men screamed with fright.

The battle is over and now I will write to his mother,
Trying to explain how she had lost a son and me a brother.

A Lesson Learned

By Scott Isenberg

My grandfather raised sheep, so when I was a child I wanted to be in 4H. It was a simple idea to have me show sheep. My grandfather was very much the father figure in my life. I was not close to my real father and we lived next door to my grandfather, so it was natural for me to respect and admire him. The only thing that really bothered me was that he always seemed to feel the need to repeat the rules to my best friend and me. It was almost like he did not trust us; we were old enough to know the rules and be responsible. What was he thinking? He would always remind us to feed the sheep every morning, to shut the gates to the pasture after ourselves, to use the proper mix of molasses and hay, etc.

My best friend Jeff and I were on the bus heading home after a day at school doing the usual: flirting, catching grasshoppers, playing basketball, and learning—in that order. We had taken this bus and this route every day since school began and we knew something was wrong when the bus stopped in the middle of the road. What was going on? This was not a normal bus stop. Everyone on the bus strained their heads to see what was happening, when we heard it.....Baaaah! Baaaah! We knew that sound—sheep, but why were there sheep here? No one who lives around here raises sheep except for us, and we were still too far away from home to hear them. Then, it hit both of us!

“Did you shut the gate?” I asked Jeff.

“What do you mean did I shut the gate? I thought you did.”

“You always shut the gate.” I shouted frantically. “You forgot,



didn't you?"

"Let's go," we shouted in unison.

Off the bus we ran, trying to corral the fifteen sheep that had escaped our pasture and then trying to drive them the half-mile back to our house. There were sheep in the church parking lot, sheep on the railroad tracks, sheep at the neighbor's house, and sheep in the road. Every time we got two sheep to go the right direction, three more would go another direction. All we could think about was that my grandfather would be home soon. What was he going to say? He was right; we were not responsible. He would never trust us again.

Neighbors came out of their homes to help; the bus driver even came back around, after dropping off all of the kids. With all of this help we did eventually get the sheep back in the pasture and behind closed gates.

A new problem arose though. What were we going to tell my grandfather? We lived in a community of about 65 people; there was no way he would not know. Jeff and I sat in the grape arbor (our secret hideaway) and nervously ate grapes, awaiting my grandfathers' return home.

We saw the truck coming down the road and instantly our stomachs started churning with a combination of nerves and grape juice. We could not lie to him; we knew that, but what if he did not ask? Did we have to tell him? My grandfather got out of the truck and walked straight to the grape arbor, somehow knowing where we would be.

"How are you, boys?" he asked.

"Fine," I replied nervously.



“Now do you boys understand?” he asked. With a grin he turned and walked away without another word ever being said of the incident.

We knew he had found out, but the way he handled the situation gave us our dignity but still made a point. We never again complained about any one repeating instructions to us, nor did we ever feel like we knew more than others. We remembered that there was always the possibility that we would make a mistake and have to live up to that mistake.

I still remember that grin as he turned and walked away. My grandfather died about ten years ago from pancreatic cancer and I still miss him.



The Stranger

By Thomas J. Andrews

In the heat of battle, I fell in danger;
I looked around and saw a stranger.

There was no cannon fire or rifle's sound:
There was naught but the quietness all around.

As He stood there atop the hill,
All about became perfectly still.

I knew I was in the midst of a battle, here,
But suddenly I had no fear.

The Stranger smiled as He looked at me.
And I thought I heard Him say. "I'll come again someday to set
you free!"

From the quietness came the bursting of a star shell:
The peace was broken and again the battle became a raging hell.



Honor Killings Must Stop

By Abigail Clark

Do you have a sister? Do you have a wife? Would you kill your mother if you found out that she was talking to a man other than your father? Most Americans think that is a silly question. Who would kill their mother, sister, or daughter for talking to a man? An estimated 5,000 women and girls were killed in the year 2000 in the name of honor (Turkey: Honor Killings Exposed, Autumn 2001). These killings are called honor killings. What exactly is an honor killing? An honor killing is the killing of a woman for “supposed” sexual offenses that blacken her family name (Peretz, July 18, 2001). These sexual offenses include talking to a man on the street, looking at another man, and being in the same room with another man. In some Middle Eastern countries, female family members are also killed for being raped (Feminism, July 2000).

Who is responsible for such killings? The killing is usually done by the woman’s father, brother, husband, or son (Peretz, July 18, 2001). Where is the honor in that? Killed by those who claim to be closest to you; there is no honor in that. Honor killings are practiced in many Muslim countries; it is also practiced in Britain, Norway, Italy, Brazil, Peru, Venezuela, and at least one case has been reported in the United States (Jordanian Queen Speaks, March, 2001).

In many countries, honor killings go unpunished. Many believe that women have no rights and that they are the property of men. Mohammed Kharabsnen, a Jordanian lawmaker for the Parliaments Legal Committee, stated, “Women adulterers cause a great threat to

our society because they are the main reason that such acts take place. If men do not find women with whom to commit adultery, they will become good on their own” (Abu-Nasr, July 9, 2000). What kind of message does that send to people? Honor killings must stop. Men, women, and children can all help. Letters to the President or Secretary of State or joining a women’s rights group, or Amnesty International, to help fight this injustice can make a difference.

I was mortified when I heard that there are actually people who support honor killings. There is a group of people who believe killing for honor is justified. Madiha El-Safty, a sociology professor at the American University in Cairo, stated, “It’s 100 percent tradition. It’s associated with the value of sexual chastity of the women” (Abu-Nasr, July 9, 2000). What kind of a tradition is that? Men can kill women for supposed sexual offenses and Madiha El-Safty justifies it by stating that it is “tradition.” These men decided on their own that honor killings were justified. Given this information, one can conclude that women have no rights. They have no freedom, and no voice.

Begum Gadhaki was sleeping next to her three-month-old son when her husband grabbed a gun and shot her dead. A neighbor had spotted a man that was not a family member near the field where she was working in Pakistan (Abu-Nasr, July 2000). It was never proven that the man came into contact with Begum Gadhaki. Begum Gadhaki never even had a chance to defend herself, and her husband, the man who killed her, was never punished for killing her.

In Turkey, honor killings are punishable by the death penalty or life in prison (Turkey: Honor Killings, Autumn 2001). Jordan is

currently working on wiping out honor crimes. Prince Ali of Jordan stated “I am embarrassed that such acts against women take place in our country” (Jamal, July 2000). The Jordanian government introduced a draft amendment proposing that honor killings be punishable by up to life in prison. The current maximum penalty is only one year in prison. Mohammed Serag, a professor of Islamic studies at the American University in Cairo, stated, “In the eyes of Islam, those people who kill in the name of honor are criminals.” He added, “They get maximum punishment...the death penalty”(Abu-Nasr, July 9, 2000). This evidence shows that there can be justice, and that honor killings can be stopped. There are countries that are taking a stand against this violent crime and as a result these women are being heard.

Tahira Shahid Khan, a professor specializing in women’s issues at the Aga Khan University in Pakistan, stated,

“Women are considered the property of males in their family irrespective of their class, ethnic, or religious group. The owner of the property has the right to decide its fate. The concept of ownership has turned into a commodity, which can be exchanged, bought, and sold” (Mayell, February 12, 2002).

Salwa Bakr, an Egyptian feminist and writer, stated, “A women in Arab societies is an object for sex and reproduction.... The way she uses her body is not her business, but the business of those who own her”(Abu-Nasr, July 09, 2000).

Zahida Perveen, a twenty- nine-year-old mother of three, was

six months pregnant when her husband brutally attacked her. Zahida's husband thought that she had been unfaithful to him, so he cut off her ears, tongue, and nose, gouged out her eyes, and then left her to die (Mayell, February 12, 2002). Zahida was very pretty before the attack, and now she is mutilated. Zahida was lucky she lived. Many would say that she was not lucky.

Many women are suffering in other countries. While we are living lives without fear, everyday is a constant fear for the women who live in these countries. Every day these women wonder if their family will kill them. These countries call these killings honor killings, but the truth is that they have nothing to do with honor.



Going Home

By Regina Hász

The decision to come back home was not one I made lightly. My mom's newly diagnosed lung cancer and my dad's failing health from Alzheimer's made my going home the only plausible alternative. My parents desperately wanted to remain at home. They needed help – help that I was willing and able to provide. I had worked in the medical field long enough to know that this scenario was most likely not going to end well. Both my parents were seriously ill and I knew that. What I did not know was that through the emotional roller coaster that we were about to encounter, I would learn a very valuable lesson. I learned that the foundation of a home is far more than concrete blocks and mortar – it is inside the heart of the home that holds it together, nothing more, and nothing less.

My mom had always been an excellent housekeeper. She loved to clean and had a particular way in which she did it. She had one dust mop she used on her bedroom floors and one she used on my dad's. We never really knew why and never had the nerve to question her. She even used car wax to shine her stainless steel sinks. She had her ways. And, God forbid anyone should hang the toilet paper the “wrong” way. Unfortunately for my mom, I had never made housekeeping such a priority in my life. My sinks were never waxed (and neither was hers once I moved back). I was lucky if I found time to dust mop at all and as far as the toilet paper goes, I felt tingly all over if anyone would even hang a new roll!

We had our struggles as we both tugged and pulled to have



things our own way. I was an independent adult, taught to be independent by the very individuals I was caring for. Through it all, I realized that these seemingly strange habits were her ways of making her house a home – her home. As I look back, I would not change a thing. I had the blessing of being with my parents, in the house that they had worked so hard to make their home, for what was to be the last days of their lives.

My dad was apparently very secure in his sexuality, as everything in the entire house was pink. It had been pink as far back as I could remember. The carpet was pink. The curtains were pink. The walls were pink. Yet, daddy never seemed to mind. Or, if he did, he never complained about it. Toward the end of his disease process, I doubt he even noticed.

Daddy's Alzheimer's had seemed to move along quite quickly once we knew my mom had cancer. He was heartbroken. They had been married for well over 50 years and the thought of being without her was frightening to him. At first he was able to feel all of the emotions we did – the fear, the anxiety, the anger, the sadness. Then, fairly quickly, he was gone. At least he was gone mentally. He sank into his own world, a world that only he knew. At that time, he began continually asking if I would take him home. At first, I tried to convince him that he was home. He would sit on the couch next to me with his frail, shaky hands folded and with a sweet little empty smile, and he would ask again and again to be taken home. I still, for obvious reasons, was unable to convince him that he was actually at home. With his confused mind and quiet spirit, he began to explain just where he thought home was, over and over and over again. He could not understand why I did not

believe what he was saying.

I was so frustrated one day with the repetitive questioning that I took him for a ride in the car and he actually navigated me, street by street, to the very house in which we had lived when I was a little girl. Unfortunately, the house was not the same as he had remembered. There was a front porch that had not been there before. The garage that daddy had built with his own hands was now a family room with sliding glass patio doors replacing the once present garage doors. The beautiful, huge maple tree that daddy had planted in the front yard was no longer there shading the concrete driveway that he had poured many years before. He didn't recognize the house at all. It was no longer the "home" he was so desperate to find. He was even more confused now, and as we drove away, my heart ached deeply for him. He so badly wanted to go home. On Tuesday, March 3, 1999, he smiled and took his last breath. He was happy to be finally going home.

My mom quietly passed away five months later after a long battle with cancer. Caring for them had totally consumed my life for almost two years and then it was suddenly over. Or was it? I soon found out that my parents had left me the house in their will. This house – the one in which my mom had taken so much pride—the one in which my dad had spent so much time in his workshop in the basement, I wondered if I could ever really make it mine.

It took me almost two more years to begin making this house my home. I finally painted over the pink walls and removed the pink carpet. I remodeled the kitchen and dining room. It took me seven shower curtains to pick out the one that I liked well enough to keep. It was very difficult. The hardest part was not in picking



out the things I liked. I know what I like in decorating. The problem I had was in visualizing this house as anything other than my parent's home. I had spent many years here with them, both when I was younger and, while they were ill. And, now, I had to somehow get past the grief, the distinct, now stale odor of the ever-present cigarette smoke (that I oddly enough found I sometimes actually missed), the memories, and the sadness of this house, and get to the part of me that could make it a home – my home.

Through all of this, I had to realize what a “home” really is. Is a home merely a wood or brick structure? Is it waxing sinks or is it pink walls or carpet? Or is it something deeper that only those with child-like minds can understand? All I know is that I am truly home now and I have found that “home” is what I make it. It is not the physical part of the brick structure. “Home” is having a house filled with God and with more love than the walls, pink or otherwise, can hold. “Home” is having a place you share with the ones you care for and who, eventually, will help care for you. It is in the memories you build being with the ones you love.

I still have all the memories of my parents' home. I have several plastic storage containers in my basement marked, “Gina's private memories.” In those boxes, I keep all the special things I have collected and saved as I transformed this house into my own home. From time to time, I get the boxes out and remember the old times in this house. I love getting out all of the old pictures and letters and going through the little things that bring it all back to me with one small sniff of the stale air that the containers seem to hold tightly and securely. I will always have those memories, but this is now my home. It is a place where there is love, there is God, and



there are memories that we are making on our own, memories that one-day, I hope my daughter will put in plastic boxes and store them in her basement as she strives to make this house her “home.”



Friend or Foe?

By Thomas J. Andrews

There is something I will probably never know:
 Was the girl I killed, a friend or foe?

In my mind, there will always be some doubt.
 If she was a friend, why did she not speak?

I was on point in this foreign land
 When she confronted me with an AK-47 in hand.

For a moment, we both stood still;
 I knew that I had to kill.

Yes, there is something I will never know.
 Was she friend or foe?



“Plan Colombia”

By Jason Bosh

Is “Plan Colombia” beneficial to the people and ecology of Colombia? At present, many Americans are not aware of the repercussions of this military campaign. There has been little media coverage in the United States of the events in Colombia, primarily because the United States government does not want any uprisings from grass roots organizations. The information indicates “Plan Colombia” is failing miserably and at great cost to the poorest people and the environment in the rainforest of southern Colombia. I feel this is a gross misuse of government resources and taxpayers’ money. I urge all Americans to take note of the data presented in this essay and to contact their Congressional representative demanding evasive action!

In August of 2000, President Bill Clinton approved an aid package called “Plan Colombia.” It was a \$1.3 billion dollar aid package meant to give assistance to law enforcement and military in Colombia to fight the cultivation and distribution of illegal crops. Along with modern weaponry and United States military advisors, a very small portion of the aid package is designated for economic reform and development. The largest portion of the United States sponsored aid package goes to the Monsanto Corporation. This is the company that produced the weed killer “Round Up.” In 2000, the Clinton administration implemented the “Plan Colombia” (US-Colombia, February 16, 2001).

Supporters of “Plan Colombia” insist that the increasing aid is necessary to stabilize Colombia and the Andean region. Many



analysts stated that the unrest caused by drug traffickers and guerilla insurgent groups not only threaten Colombia, but also the neighboring countries. Some insurgent guerilla movements have indeed crossed over the border into Ecuador, in turn victimizing the citizens. According to supporters, this justifies building up the Colombian military. Also, in recent years the links between drug traffickers and insurgent groups have drawn closer. The guerilla insurgents have been known to force civilians and land owners to cultivate coca and poppy crops. Those who resisted were subjected to torture or brutally murdered.

Critics believed that the measures taken in “Plan Colombia” are counterproductive. Many commentators believe that hard-line military force is not the only solution. They stated that the United States should instead support further pursuit of the peace process between the Colombian government and the guerrilla insurgents. Also, many observers felt that military equipment and logistical support will do little to diminish the influx of illegal drugs into the United States. According to Republican Jan Schakowsky (Illinois), the ineffectiveness of such strong-arm tactics has proved by past failures of American-led drug interdiction efforts. “From 1990 to 1998, we spent \$625 billion in Colombia, and here is what we got: a 50 percent increase in coca production” (US-Colombia relations, February 16, 2002).

The method for crop eradication has been to aerial spray the coca crops with Round Up, a glyphosate-based weed killer widely used on American crops. Some have said that there are direct affects on human health and on legitimate crops. “Colombia’s human-rights ombudsman claims that additives in Roundup, from



the Monsanto Corporation, designed to make it stick to plants are damaging to health. They include polyoxyethylenesmines, which irritate the respiratory tract, eyes and skin, and a byproduct, dioxan, a suspected carcinogen” (Trouble for Plan Colombia, August 2001).

The Monsanto Corporation also manufactured Agent Orange during the Vietnam conflict. The data showed that since the Vietnam War, 500,000 babies have been born with deformities in Vietnam and \$180 million has been paid in compensation to United States War veterans.

Furthermore, in Colombia many legitimate crops are destroyed and only a small percentage of the coca crops are affected. Most of the aerial spraying is concentrated in the southern Putumayo region of Colombia. It is a predominately poor agricultural community in proximity to the dense rain forest in Colombia. Subsistence crops like yucca, corn, and banana crops are being killed while coca crops nearby continue to flourish (Panetta, n.d.).

Additionally, there is concern that the military aid sent to Colombia to help with the guerrilla insurgents and narcotraffickers will be fully involved in the conflict. The United States Embassy official admitted that the line between the two struggles is ambiguous (Cooper, January 20, 2002). This fact implied that without the ability to distinguish the forces, that American forces will be part of the conflict as strategic targets.

By far, the most insidious problem is the paramilitary forces deployed to counter guerilla forces. The paramilitaries have been connected with gross abuse of human rights.

Over the past two years the paramilitary forces have been

responsible for more than 70% of the massacres in Colombia. The number of victims by paramilitaries rose from 30 in 1997 to over 500 (as compared to 164 killed by guerillas) in 2000 (including 75 massacres) (Panetta, n.d).

The paramilitaries use torture and murder in its most grizzly form to instill terror in the civilians. They decapitate, cave peoples faces in, and mutilate and dismember limbs and torsos. It has been stated that the Colombian military and the paramilitary act as a united force. Gomez Mendez, the Attorney General of Colombia, has issued more than 40 warrants for Carlos Castano, the head of the paramilitary forces. General Fernando Tapias, chief of all Colombian military forces, is being accused of protecting Castano from prosecution.

The division of the paramilitary forces in the Putumayo forces is the 24th Brigade. This brigade is infamous for their human rights abuses. Additionally, the paramilitaries depended on the drug trade to support them and assist in their growth. Aside from the obvious implications of extreme corruption in the Colombian military, there are ecological damages occurring as well. The precious Rain Forest where many indigenous populations inhabit, are being decimated at a dramatic rate. The medicinal plants they depend on are being eradicated by both the expansion of coca crops and the fumigation of the crops. In conclusion, their way of life and their very existence is in great peril.

Consequently, it can be concluded that the ultimate goal of the paramilitaries is to cleanse the region of all its indigenous population and peasant farmers. They extort the population to



serve their needs. Any refusal to comply means death. Any refusal to comply is considered collaboration with the guerilla forces. Personally, I believe the paramilitaries mutilate and kill for the pleasure of doing so.

With the United States providing full support of the paramilitary, it can be seen that the “War on Drugs” is just a cover. The real campaign is about the protection of American and multinational corporations. The huge contract with the Monsanto Corporation and the huge oil reserves stored in this country all play their roles. By ignoring the human rights issues and the ecological impacts of “Plan Colombia,” our government is guilty of genocide.

Finally, it needs to be realized that the drug problem is not a Colombia problem. It is an American problem fueled by insatiable demand. Until this demand is greatly reduced or eliminated, there will always be someone elsewhere willing to make a profit to meet that demand. As far as “Plan Colombia” is concerned, different measures of coca eradication needs to be assessed. Colombian Vice President Gustavo Bell suggested manually removing the crops. It is estimated that one hectare of coca can be pulled up by one worker in ten days. Unfortunately, despite many farmers’ wishes to comply, to be able to find an alternative crop and to remove the coca crops in a specified amount of time is unrealistic. This would be an issue that needs a great amount of funding and technical know how. It does not benefit the big corporations contracted by the United States Military, so it is unlikely that this idea will come to be. The country of Colombia is under biochemical attack and violence is on the rise. It is time for the American public to educate themselves about this murderous plot of genocide and corruption.

With the new found knowledge, we should all make our voices heard so Congress can be persuaded to take action to revise the strategy and assist with human rights. Once the Amazon region is destroyed and the people removed, it can never be brought back. That would be a tragedy I cannot accept.



A Second Chance

By Samantha Jarrell

On December 14, 1991, a car at 86th and Guilford Avenue struck me as I was going to the library to do a social studies report with a friend. Her dad had picked me up earlier and dropped us off at the Wendy's in Nora to have lunch beforehand. Because my hair was still wet when we left home and it was cold outside, I put my coat over my head. My friend was on the median and was going to tell me when it was okay to cross. When she told me it was okay, I attempted to cross, but I was hit by a car.

The accident resulted in T.B.I. (traumatic brain injury) and stroke. My parents were told that my chances of making it through the night were slim and that if I did make it I would be a vegetable. I was in a coma for six weeks. When I awoke I was like a baby again. I couldn't talk (possibly why I talk so much now), had no control over bowel or bladder, and I couldn't walk. All of these things had to be relearned. This is when the therapies began: speech therapy to teach my how to talk again, occupational therapy to teach me how to use my hands again, how to dress myself, and how to bathe again, and physical therapy to teach me how to walk again.

Therapy was difficult at best. It went on intermittently for 5 years. It was extremely frustrating since my muscles had atrophied in the coma. Thinking back on it now, occupational therapy was probably the hardest because my left hand was in a fist due to spasticity. The therapists thought that with enough stretching and such that they would be able to get my hand to open and function normally.



Because I was taken to Methodist when the accident initially happened, I was always referred to Methodist practices. After about four years, I somehow got into contact with the Indiana Hand Center. They decided to try a surgery called a page-slide. We, my parents and I, were of course reluctant since nothing had worked in the past. But, through prayer and the grace of God it did. My hand is now open, for the most part.

Physical therapy was equally difficult. Since I had the stroke, my left side did not want to cooperate as my right did. I had to wear a full-length leg brace on my left leg for about 2 or 3 years. This brace had hinges to keep my knee from slapping back. As my muscles grew progressively stronger, I graduated to a shorter leg brace. After this brace, I graduated to an ankle brace. I was proud of myself. I could now walk and use my hand.

Speech therapy dealt with speaking and with more of the cognitive sort of things. I enjoyed speech therapy because we got to play games on the computer. Speech therapy was frustrating, too; it took me about 6 months to talk again. Before that, I had a spelling board, which had numbers and letters on it, and I would spell out what I wanted to say. Also, the pastor of my church knew a little bit of sign language and taught me how to say “I love you,” and “yes and no” with my hands.

I was in the seventh grade at the time of the accident and with the help of the hospital and the school system, I was able to continue on to eighth grade with my class the following school year. The hospital provided a teacher for the school-aged children so they wouldn’t fall behind. To catch up when I got home, the school system provided an in-home tutor for the summer.

After five years, and much perseverance on my part, I had regained many of the abilities the doctors thought impossible. I sometimes wish that that I could go back and show them how much I have progressed in eleven years, but they have all retired. I am often asked by people if I could go back and have it not happen, what would I say? I would say that the accident and all I went through over the past eleven years have been difficult, but have made me who I am today. I wouldn't change anything.



Sylvia's Song

(A Tribute to Sylvia Plath)

By *Helena Osak*

Drowning in a sea of despair
The waves wash back and forth over my body
Leaving my sun bleached bones on the beach
To be consumed by dogs.
The moon smirks at my fate,
She has seen it played like a Stradivarius
Since the first millennium.
Faint heart, faint sex,
I beg Orion with these lies.
Luna decries that which Sol does transpire.
Sparing with love, luka, and lothing has not.
As sharp a blade as unrequited love.
The dark night of the soul that cannot rest
Quits its breath in the cloak of darkness.

Originally published in 1994 in *Impressions*.

Saving the Rainforests

By Shannon Faris

Environmental activists and logging companies have been fighting an age old battle regarding the tropical rainforests. Should logging companies have free reign to clear cut the forests to supply the ever growing demand for tropical wood products? Should we follow the movement enforced by Greenpeace and other environmental groups which state our planet is in grave danger of global warming? Do the rainforests really affect lives in the United States?

Controversy abounds on the future of the world's rainforests. Many theorize that rainforest depletion will cause irreversible ecological damage that species will become extinct, that potential new drugs will never be discovered, that the world's climate will be negatively affected, and that indigenous people will be displaced (Jastrzemski, September 20, 2001).

This information suggests that tropical deforestation can have an adverse affects in many different avenues globally. To get a better understanding of the possible devastation, consider these facts.

There are many different kinds of rainforests, which are classified primarily by climate, altitude, latitude, either alone or in combination. Tropical rainforests lie near the middle of the earth, ten degrees either side of the equator. The most well known of the tropical rainforests are in the Amazon Basin in Brazil, South



America; others are located in Southern Asia and the Congo Basin in Africa. “Tropical forests are the oldest living ecosystems” (Rainforest Action Network, n.d.). They sustain themselves and help to maintain global atmospheric gases around our planet.

“Despite the small land area they cover, rainforests are home to about half of the 5 to 10 million plant and animal species on the globe” (Rainforest Action Network, n.d.). Consider with each square mile of forest that is cleared how many animal species are destroyed and may be extinct because we never knew they existed. This is one good reason that environmentalists have been fighting “the good fight.” They are well aware that extinction of an animal or plant is something we can never get back. Once it is gone, it is gone forever. “One fourth of the medicines available today owe their existence to plants, seventy percent of the plants identified by the Nation Cancer Institute as useful in cancer treatment are found only in the rainforests” (Rainforest Action Network, n.d.). These facts point out that if the rainforest is destroyed, our planet may very well lose a valuable resource for fighting cancer and other various diseases. Additionally, when and where will the logging companies stop? Can you imagine in fifty years once all of the rainforests are gone, trying to describe to your children, or grandchildren, what the rainforest was like in the year 2003. You will also have to tell them that as an individual, you did nothing to stop the devastating deforestation.

Due to the human consumption of fossil fuels, along with severe tropical deforestation, the earth’s climate is warming up. The rainforests help to regulate the atmospheric greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide which cause global

warming. Without intervention of tropical deforestation, over the next few centuries, the gases will continue to increase to much higher levels (Gaffin, 2002). As a result, “the Earth’s surface could warm anywhere between two to six degrees Fahrenheit (1 to 3.5 degrees Celsius)” (Gaffin, 2002).

With each cause, there is an effect. When the world warms up the colder regions, such as the Arctic, glaciers will start to melt, therefore, causing the sea levels to rise globally. “A commonly cited estimate is that 50 to 70 percent of humanity lives within the coastal zone” (Gaffin, 2002). Many small islands, their inhabitants, and much of the coastal property around the world will then be under water. Once what was prime coastal real estate will be no more. What is to become of all the displaced islanders? After their homes are destroyed and they have no jobs, where will they go?

On the other side of the issue, there have been many claims that false information regarding the destruction of the rainforest has been given to the public. Moore, the former co-founder of the organization Greenpeace, refutes the claims of mass destruction and states, “you would have cleared 50 times the size of the Amazon already if accurate” (Ranamuck, n.d.). Another supporter, Brazilian official Luis Almir “calculated using five football fields a minute and sarcastically concludes that, if the numbers were correct, ‘we would have a desert bigger than the Sahara’ “ (Ranamuck, n.d.). This information refutes the claims that tropical deforestation will occur between the years 2050 and 2100. The environmentalist community also claims that the Amazon basin is the “lungs of the earth.” The opposition states that the rainforests use as much oxygen as they produce and that the true user of



carbon dioxide is young fast growing trees, not the Amazon forest which is old and slow growing. "Supporters of logging refute claims that logging has a negative impact on the environment, saying that new approaches to cutting trees can actually help forests thrive" (Logging in National Forests, 2003). This evidence suggests that there are positive effects to logging in the forests, just as deer hunters provide a thinning of deer in deer season so that the forests are not overrun by them.

Harvard researcher Edward O. Wilson declared that approximately 50,000 species will be extinct annually due to tropical deforestation (Harvey, 2002). Greenpeace cofounder Patrick Moore stated, "There is no scientific basis for saying that 50,000 species are going extinct," and that "the only place you can find them is in Edward O. Wilson's computer at Harvard University. They're actually electrons on a hard drive" (Harvey, 2002). Moore goes on to say, "You're telling me that I'm supposed to prove that those species didn't go extinct when they're not there anymore and we never knew they were there in the first place" (Harvey, 2002)? This information suggests that the falsifications of the numbers are vastly overplayed and that scientific figures do not concur with the notion of animal and plant extinction.

Finally, other benefits to logging in the rainforests are helping to sustain a work force by supplying thousands of jobs to the men and women in our families. This in turn helps to support our unstable economy. Also, due to the enormous paper product demands, it takes one tree for every man, woman and child annually to support their need. In addition to paper products, special water resistant tropical woods are good for many uses. Teak, mahogany, and



redwoods are used in building of ships and for furniture and in the construction of houses.

The greenhouse effect is not on the horizon any longer. It is here. Our eco-system is out of whack. Because logging companies continue to cut down the rainforests, the forest is having trouble stabilizing itself, therefore causing a chain reaction all over the world. Weather patterns have changed; temperatures around the world are increasing, thus causing long droughts in California and Western America. In different areas, there is severe flooding. Farmers cannot retrieve their crops because the land is too wet or the rain has washed away the seeds. Due to logging, burning of the forests, and farming, animal extinction is a real threat. Natural habitats have been and are being destroyed. The war on tropical deforestation is a threat to all of us, not just the environmental activists. On the other hand, logging companies are just trying to produce specialty woods to meet the demands of the market while supplying jobs in a tough economy.

How can anyone ignore the seriousness of this issue? The planet's future is at stake, but some person somewhere wants a nice mahogany bedroom set. What is more important: The air we breathe, the health of our planet, or the beautiful teak coffee table that sits in our living room? Any one person can make a difference by not fueling the demand for these specialty woods. Stop buying tropical wood products and there will be no need to log in the rainforest. Our rainforests are the planet's lifeline. Once they are gone, life as we know it will cease to exist.



Source of Unity

by Heather Baughman

There is always one moment
when everyone is feeling it
when the beat hits us all alike
when the mass of people are one
There is always a moment like that.

There is always one moment
when an amazing dancer floats
when a phenomenal DJ spins flawlessly
when a dancer and DJ understand one another
There is always a moment like that.

There is always one moment
when strangers come together
when recognition sparks
when, in the blink of an eye, the strangers become friends
There is always a moment like that.

There is always one moment
when we just want to dance
when things have fallen through
when everyone is sober and having just as much fun
There is always a moment like that.

There is always one moment
when you remember why you suffer
when you accept the ridicule as opinions
when those opinions don't matter and the peace is overwhelming
There is always a moment like that.

These are the moments we live by.

This is why we rave.



A Disposable Child

By Marshia Mingee

It was 1945, and I was four-years-old when my mother abandoned the family. My father, who was twenty-eight at the time, was alone to raise four children under the age of seven. With no family support, he did what was acceptable at the time, which was to place us in an orphanage. I was a disposable child, the wreckage of adult mistakes.

For seven years of my life, my address was “The Evangelical Home for Orphans and Old People,” 6700 West Outer Drive, Detroit, Michigan. Fifty years later, this address, as well as the memory of my experience are still with me. I lost the closeness and comfort of my brothers and sister. I experienced holidays without my family. I became an orphan growing up in an institution.

The orphanage was a large, red brick, two-story building that housed 150 children. Boys and girls lived on separate floors; the girls lived on the upper floor, the boys below. We all shared the same dining room. The building had a basement for us to play in during bad weather. The playground was behind the main building. It had metal swings, merry-go-rounds, monkey bars, and sandboxes. A chapel attached to the main building was where we attended church every Sunday, dropping our penny into the collection plate.

After entering the orphanage, I rarely saw my brothers, Albert and Gregory, who lived on the lower floor. Our lives were lived parallel. I would see them through a crowd of faces on the way to school or across the dining room. My sister, Lorraine, lived on the same floor as I did, but because we had different housemothers, we



also lived different daily lives. As the years of separation passed, I felt like we were strangers with the same last name. I felt very lonely and sad.

My father would come to the orphanage to visit on Sundays, I would watch for him from the window of my dormitory. The bus would stop in front of the building and parents of the children would arrive. I looked forward to each Sunday, because I missed my father so much. We would spend the day together playing and just being together. My sister, brothers, and I would fight for his attention. Evening would come and I would watch from the window as he boarded the bus and it pulled away.

I adapted to the routine of the orphanage relatively quick. The bell, not unlike a fire bell, would scream its ring every day to awaken me. The bell would ring to announce meals, to send me to school, and to play. Finally, the bell would ring to signal me to sleep.

Along the walls of my dormitory were little white metal beds and at the foot of each bed was a white wooden chair. The room had an overhead light that hummed all the time. The room was bare of pictures. The bathroom was made of a marble-like material. There were open shower stalls and a large, round sink that sprayed water like a fountain when I pushed a large rubber pedal that encircled the bottom. I had a locker that held my towel and the few toys I owned.

The floors in the halls outside my dormitory had checkered linoleum. I counted the black squares as I walked in single file down the hall to my destination. The walls were green to hide little handprints. Janitors were always present, buffing floors or cleaning bathrooms.



Parishioners of the church that owned the orphanage donated my clothes. I wore them until new hand-me-down clothes arrived. My church clothes became my school clothes and my school clothes became my play clothes.

I learned the rules from Mrs. Klugie and Miss Fletner, my stern German housemothers. Their rules, and there were many, were never to be broken. Noisy children were not tolerated. Silence was safe. I was an anxious, scared little girl. I missed my father, my sister, and brothers. I cried from loneliness. Mrs. Klugie tired of me, and punished me by putting me in the linen closet. And she turned out the light. I could hear her heavy, accented voice tell me through the door, "You can come out when you are not a crybaby."

I soon learned to be invisible because visibility meant scolding or punishment. In my silence, I read books. In my imagination, I became Nancy Drew, detective, or Cherry Ames, R.N. Their lives became my life and I escaped.

I had a friend named Arpena. Her bed was next to mine in the dormitory. We would whisper in the darkness until we fell asleep. Miss Fletner called Arpena "willful" because she didn't follow the rules. I watched my friend being spanked for pushing in line or writing on her chair with crayons. Arpena never showed fear or remorse. And she repeated her crimes.

The Holidays were times when anonymous people from various organizations brought generic gifts to the orphanage. An Easter basket was set at my plate in the dining room. I never knew who sent it.

Christmas was busy for us orphans. Many organizations brought gifts and as they arrived, we would file down to the



auditorium. We would perform so they could enjoy their generosity. My friend Arpena and I would look at each other rolling our eyes, as we sang yet another Christmas Carol for their enjoyment. “Oh well” said Arpena, out of the corner of her mouth, “What’s one more Jingle Bells?” We then were given a girl’s or a boy’s gift for which we would demonstrate the expected excitement. I always knew there was no Santa Claus.

Every year members of the Lutheran church would volunteer to take a child into their home for the Christmas holidays. The house-mothers would submit a list of names of the good children for their selection. There were never enough volunteer homes so I waited for my turn. Eventually, the year came when someone chose me. They were a nice couple with two older children. They tried to make Christmas fun for me, but I was shy, and uncomfortable with strangers. I wanted to go back to the orphanage, to what was familiar.

Seven years passed, and I had given up all hope of ever leaving the orphanage. Then, in 1952, when I was eleven-years-old, my father came on one of his Sunday visits with news that he was getting married. He told us her name was Grace, and he promised as soon as he had a home for us, he would take us away from the orphanage. A few months passed before that day finally arrived.

I was excited as my father loaded all of us onto the Greyhound bus heading to our new home. I sat very close to my father, as I held the grocery sack filled with all my possessions. As the bus pulled away from the orphanage, I was afraid to look back, because I knew my friend Arpena was standing at the window.



Every Time...Every Ride

By Donna J. Wolfe

Everyone who rides horses, no matter how experienced or how careful, eventually falls. The key to safe riding is to accept this reality and for a rider to do his or her best to protect himself or herself from serious injury. One of these ways is to wear protective headgear, which may not be stylish in the show pen, but is “smart” all the same. Horseback riding without a helmet is always dangerous and is considered a high-risk sport with often-severe injuries.

Many equestrians simply do not see the need for a helmet, especially if the rider-horse combination is experienced. Therefore, a more experienced rider-horse combination should have better riding recovery skills than a beginning rider-horse team. However, unpreventable accidents can happen regardless of the team’s experience level. If an experienced rider falls off a horse, the equestrian’s body will come to a stop when it hits the ground, but the brain movement within the skull keeps traveling at the previous speed. When the brain slams into the inside of the skull, it may even bounce back to the other side of the skull and slam into it again. Even a small bump to the brain can result in a minor concussion, and a massive jolt can cause permanent brain damage or death. While riding with a helmet does not eliminate a rider’s injuries sustained during a fall, wearing a helmet will soften the blow. The helmet’s liner absorbs energy, which allows the head’s velocity to slow before the initial collision with the ground or with an equestrian hazard.

Low-hanging tree branches are a big nuisance to horseback trail

riders. Many trail riders have been knocked off their horses because they were not looking ahead on a trail ride in the woods. Not only is the impact of the branch painful, but also the fall that follows can increase the severity of the injuries. A properly-fitted helmet would absorb this blow from a low-hanging branch. Many of the newer models of helmets have attached sun visors, which is a wonderful new advance safety device for trail riders.

Another commonly cited reason for failure to wear an approved helmet for all mounted activity is helmet discomfort. If helmets were more comfortable, riders might be more inclined to wear a helmet while riding. The equestrian industry has advanced today's helmet technology. Today's helmets are well-designed, fit a variety of head shapes, are lightweight and well-ventilated, and are available in a variety of colors and styles. The key to a helmet that is comfortable and safe is one that properly fits a rider's head. To an equestrian, a bad fitting helmet can slip down over the rider's eyes. Obviously such uncomfortable blindness would discourage the use of a helmet. Thus, the correct size of a helmet is imperative to any equestrian.

Helmet expense is another "hot button" for most equestrians. Because the purchase of horse tack is expensive, most riders will try to reduce costs whenever possible. Fortunately, as the public became more involved in the safety of equestrian sports, the cost of helmets has decreased over the years. Therefore, riders need to consider the cost differences between the price of a properly-fitted helmet and hospital costs for treatment of an acute head injury.

Another thing to consider is the price tag of a life if the rider fails to put on a helmet before mounting. Death is not the only

serious outcome of unprotected head injuries. If a rider survives with a brain injury, he or she may suffer epilepsy, intellectual and/or memory impairment, and even personality changes. After taking all of this information into consideration, the cost of a properly-fitted helmet is a tiny price tag for enhanced safety.

In addition, many equestrian riders claim that approved helmets are not attractive to the observer. Professional Hunt Seat Riders often wear hunt caps, because they prefer their appearance more than that of an approved helmet. Likewise, the Professional Western Riders prefer the style of a traditional cowboy hat instead of a helmet. The perception that a helmet is not attractive could begin to change if the top high-profile riders-trainers in both riding styles were pictured wearing an approved riding helmet. These professionals are role models for children and adults whose careers they mentor. Why should the everyday backyard rider be encouraged to wear a helmet when the equestrian role models do not do so? If a rider's mentors and friends wore approved helmets for all mounted activities, that rider would also be more likely to wear approved protective headgear.

Likewise, there is now a growing trend toward riding stables that only allow their students to ride in a class with an approved helmet. One of the major reasons behind riding stables changing their rules is the high profile riding accidents reported in the media. In the past, a student could sign a waiver not to wear a helmet while riding in a class at a stable. However, the waiver is legally worthless and only pacifies the student and stable involved. In order to legally protect the stable, it is becoming necessary to insist that a rider wear an approved helmet while at the stable.

The advantages of wearing a helmet offset the disadvantages for an equestrian rider. Approved helmets can help save equestrians' lives and reduce the level of injury caused by an accident. There is nothing odd about wearing a helmet, especially if the helmet saves a life or prevents a broken bone. Death or severe long-term injury is a high price to pay for avoiding a simple safety precaution of riding with an approved helmet.



Love Yourself and Be Free

By Samantha Laskowski

Sometimes it is easier for people to focus on the unattractive parts of their personalities. Self-hate, self-loathing, and feelings of inadequacy are common feelings in most of us. Teenagers are especially susceptible to these. At a time in life when nothing makes sense, when there is no real sense of self present, and when they just want to fit in and be liked, these unpleasantities become more apparent than ever. Peers are cruel and make no attempt to hide it. I had to learn the hard way that sometimes how other people see you isn't as important as how you see yourself. Four years out of high school, I am just now beginning to understand this. Only when you accept yourself, shortcomings and all, can you truly begin to appreciate life. Only when you can love yourself, can you truly be free.

"Freak!" "Satan worshipper!" "Crazy b****!" my classmates would say. These are just a few of the things I would hear screamed at me every day as I walked down the halls of Ben Davis High School. Not that they weren't completely unwarranted. I had green hair, thirty-two piercings, wore black clothes and make-up. I felt that I was simply expressing myself differently than they were. "They're just ignorant," I would tell myself. Never really caring what they said, I went about my days happily, or so I thought. Being different was not a bad thing in my book. I was raised to be self-expressive and not care what other people thought about me or the things I did. That all changed my sophomore year.

The one extra curricular activity I took part in was debate. It

was a place where I could show everyone that even though I looked strange, I had a brain! Varsity debaters were responsible for training the novice. Matt was my “group leader,” as they were called. We hit it off instantly, but there was one rule that stood above all others. Group leaders were not allowed to date their novices. We were young and in love, but unable to let anyone in on our secret. An entire year passed before I was finally considered varsity. Matt and I could officially let the rest of the world in on our love. Happiness comes with a price, and it did.

I was much more liberal than Matt. I used drugs, drank, and was out all hours of the night, while he studied. His one and only goal was Wabash College, and mine was to have fun. I was young, carefree, beautiful, and life was great. My best friend, Renee, and I were going to get all we could out of it.

The summer of 1995 changed my mind. Renee and I invited a friend of hers over for a small get together. Matt did not want to participate in the fun, so he went home. Renee and I were at my house, with her new friend Ben. He was twenty-three at the time, Renee and I fifteen. True to form, we told Ben to bring alcohol since my parents were in Las Vegas. Ben obliged with Aftershock, an extremely strong cinnamon liqueur. I drank half the bottle, Renee the other half. Drunk could not describe our condition at the end of the bottle. If asked, I probably could not have spelled my name correctly. Perceptive as he was, Ben saw our condition and used it to his advantage.

That night Renee and I were both raped by a twenty-three year old sober man in my parents’ house. The crime scene was my bed, which I slept in every night after for three years. As teenagers we



felt lost and this incident completely threw me into a downward spiral. No one knew except Renee, Ben, and me. Blaming ourselves, Renee and I kept the evil secret for as long as possible. We pretended everything was ok, and actually believed it for a while.

I was rapidly deteriorating and didn't even realize it. I became a heavy user of all illicit substances, simply because I no longer cared whether I lived or died. Razor blades and hot pieces of metal were my new friends, self-destruction my new pastime. Matt saw what I became, but couldn't understand why. My entire junior year in high school was a fiasco. No one understood what was happening, and I didn't see it.

The summer of 1996 was when it hit the fan, so to speak. Matt had gone to Kentucky to visit with his mother when he called me to tell me it was over. "I can't stand by and watch you do this anymore, Sam, I'm sorry," he said. Now I really had nothing left; I felt completely alone and didn't know who or what to turn to, so I hurt myself. Mom and Dad saw the cuts and burns, but I wouldn't speak about them. The pain gave me something else to think about, if only for a short time.

After I was arrested twice for shoplifting, Mom finally sat me down and demanded answers. Loathing myself and everything around me, I told her the entire story. It was killing me slowly, and I couldn't deal with it alone anymore. To my surprise, she was understanding and helped me get therapy.

Two years of therapy was just what I needed. Days and weeks of crying myself to sleep, self-mutilation, and screaming in rage slowly passed, and I healed. The next fall I went to medical assisting school, and actually made it through. My larger goal was law school,



but I thought working as a medical assistant would be a good way to save money to go further. I surprised myself by enjoying the medical profession. I decided to stay where I was for a while. I moved out of my parents' house, started dating again, and started getting back into life. Another year went by and two boyfriends later, I met Kevin.

A traveling nurse from Alabama? I would have said you were crazy two years ago. Real men simply weren't my type. I was used to dating lazy, sycophant type creatures who looked out only for number one. Kevin changed that for me. He constantly tells me how beautiful I am and shows me true affection. The little things he does for me make me feel special and loved for the first time in my life; however, it still isn't enough to be loved only by someone else. True happiness comes from within.

Time passes, things change, and people grow. I am no exception to that rule. My parents, my therapist, and Kevin, all helped me to realize that I am needed, important, and loved. Mending myself wasn't easy or quick, but it was well worth the struggles. I am finally ok with myself and with my life. I now know what it means to love myself. Loving yourself isn't vanity, it isn't material possessions, and it isn't what everyone else says about me. Loving myself means being able to look in the mirror every day and say to myself, "I am a good person, and I will be all right." Once I learned how to do that, everything else fell into place. Once I could look in the mirror and be happy with what I saw, then I knew true freedom.



A Student's Dream

A Parody of Edgar Allen Poe's "The Raven"

By *Helena Osa*

Once upon a school day dreary
Sat a student weak and weary
Dreaming of commencement day when
There would be no textbooks then
Turn upon her heel, and chin high
Bid her Ivy Tech good-bye
No more halls and to the stairwell
Bidding teachers all their farewell
To be seen (like the lost Lenore
and the Raven) — Nevermore!

Originally published in 1994 in *Impressions*

How to Submit Your Manuscripts and Art Work to *New Voices*

It is a good idea to have your instructor critique and edit your manuscript. When ready, the instructor collects two copies of your manuscript and one disk in Microsoft Word, 12 point, Times New Roman.

Leave your name off one copy of your manuscript.

Label your disk with your name, title of your work, and your instructor's name. Your disk should have your manuscript and a mini-bio of yourself in 50 words or less. Nothing else should be on your disk.

Personal essays, short stories, poetry, and expository writing of all types are accepted. Manuscripts of four pages or less will be given first consideration.

Original black and white artwork (of an appropriate size) may also be submitted to your instructor. Cover designs are welcome. Follow the same guidelines as for the written manuscript.

You may be asked to sign a permission form. Your instructor has the form.

NO work will be returned. By giving the manuscript and the art work to the instructor for this publication, you are granting permission to publish.

Manuscripts and art work are chosen by an editorial board. Authorship is not revealed until the material is accepted.

Any unpublished manuscripts or art work not published may be considered for a future issue.

Deadline for Spring 2005 issue is October 1, 2004.



VINCENNES
UNIVERSITY

